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Held at Headquarters, New York, on Wednesday, 22 October 1997, at 10 a.m.

Chairman: Mr. de Rojas ..... (Venezuela)

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The meeting was called to order at 10.20 a.m.

Agenda item 97: Sustainable development and international economic cooperation (A/52/92, A/52/112, A/52/139, A/52/153-S/1997/384, A/52/163, A/52/217-S/1997/507, A/52/284, A/52/318, A/52/447-S/1997/775)

(i) Cultural development (A/52/382, A/52/413)

1. **Mr. Childe** (United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO)), introducing the report of the Director-General on the implementation of the World Decade for Cultural Development during the period 1994-1997 (A/52/382), said that the actions carried out in the framework of the Decade had highlighted the fundamental role played by culture as both a framework and a dynamic factor in the socio-economic transformation process of sustainable human development. The argument advanced in the report of the World Commission on Culture and Development was that development embraced not only access to goods and services, but also the opportunity to choose a full, satisfying, valuable and valued way of living together and the flourishing of human existence in all its forms.

2. The main achievements of the Decade included the awareness created regarding the interrelationship between culture and development; the substantial progress made in accumulating and disseminating methodological and technical knowledge for a more culturally sensitive approach to development; the implementation of several hundred initiatives throughout the world demonstrating the soundness of that approach; the development of networks of information, research and pilot projects in that field; and the substantial reinforcement of inter-agency partnerships.

3. It was, however, too early to conduct a formal assessment of the activities undertaken in the course of the Decade because not all the results were in and such results as were in were difficult to quantify, since the Decade's main objectives were to change perceptions and mentalities, to heighten the international community's awareness of the need to take cultural dimension of development into account and, more generally, to encourage it to reflect upon the motivating forces underlying development. In that regard, the considerable interest and discussions generated by the report of the World Commission on Culture and Development bore witness to the fact that the Decade's objectives were becoming a part of mainstream thinking on development.

4. During the past three years, activities had focused on interdisciplinary projects of a regional scope in three priority areas: strengthening of inter-agency cooperation; publication of the results of extensive research into methods and techniques for integrating the cultural dimension into development; and publication of and debate on the report of the World Commission on Culture and Development.

5. The Intergovernmental Committee of the World Decade for Cultural Development had concluded its final session with a very positive assessment of the activities implemented under the Decade, but had pointed out that efforts to give culture a central role in development should not cease just because the Decade was ending. Indeed, it had stressed the need for follow-up activities and projects in the forthcoming biennium in order to sustain the momentum created by the Decade.

6. Finally, he expressed the hope that, in the international development strategy for the fifth United Nations development decade, culture would at last occupy its rightful place, and he urged members of the Committee to support the draft resolution on the item.

7. **Mr. Schumacher** (Luxembourg), speaking on behalf of the European Union, and the associate countries of Bulgaria, Cyprus, the Czech Republic, Hungary, Latvia, Lithuania, Romania, Slovakia and Slovenia, and, in addition, Norway, welcomed the fact that, for the first time since 1985, all the members of the European Union were now members of UNESCO, following the United Kingdom's decision to rejoin the organization.

8. He also welcomed the many activities and intercultural projects carried out as part of the Decade in various regions of the world and the fact that agencies of the United Nations system had participated in the Decade programme.

9. The European Union was pleased that the Executive Board of UNESCO had accepted the offer by Sweden to host an intergovernmental conference on cultural policies in 1998. It also supported the methodological research project on the integration of cultural factors in development strategies, which approached development from a cultural perspective, emphasizing the diversity and creativity of different cultures and the need to tailor each project to the appropriate context.

10. The European countries had made further important contributions to the Decade in recent years. Worthy of note among the growing number of regional and interregional projects, were the efforts made by the research programme on the management of cultural pluralism in Europe, which had proposed the setting up of research and policy networks on specific topics. The European Union awaited with interest

the results of work conducted by the research groups to be submitted in 1998.

11. He expressed the hope that the programmes of UNESCO and other United Nations agencies would continue to reflect the cultural dimension in the process of sustainable development even after the end of the Decade.

12. **Ms. Krishna** (India) said that culture constituted a fundamental dimension of the development process and helped to strengthen the independence, sovereignty and identity of a nation. Genuine development sought to promote the continuing well-being and fulfilment of every individual. Therefore, the overall development of society called for complementary policies in the fields of culture, education, science and communication, with a view to establishing a harmonious balance between technological, intellectual and moral advancement.

13. It was from that perspective that India had participated in and supported the work of the World Decade for Cultural Development. The emphasis, particularly in the last three years, on implementing interdisciplinary projects at the regional level, strengthening inter-agency cooperation and promoting research into methods of integrating the cultural dimension into development had yielded impressive results.

14. Although the report of the World Commission on Culture and Development had analysed the issues of culture and development in a creative and useful manner, its recommendations were perhaps not in tune with the current realities of international cooperation and did not take into account the actions undertaken elsewhere in the United Nations system. For instance, it was not clear why a summit was required on the subject of culture and development and why the issue could not be considered as part of the follow-up to the recent major conferences. It would be useful to have the report discussed in greater detail at UNESCO before it was submitted to the General Assembly for further consideration. At the same time, India supported follow-up to the major accomplishments of the World Decade for Cultural Development and the idea that the interaction between culture and development should remain a priority in UNESCO programmes after the conclusion of the Decade (A/52/382, para. 29).

15. **Mr. Öztürk** (Turkey) said that his country was fully committed to the main objectives of the World Decade for Cultural Development and had actively participated in its projects. The Decade had made a significant contribution to highlighting the cultural dimension of development and it was essential that the momentum that it had generated should be maintained. Efforts should now be concentrated on ensuring that Governments and national decision makers understood the importance of integrating the cultural dimension in economic development efforts.

16. **Ms. Cui Ying** (China) said that, in an increasingly multi-polar world, the relationship between culture and development had taken on increased importance. The report of the World Commission on Culture and Development, *Our Creative Diversity*, provided a basis from which to explore the influence of culture in the contemporary world.

17. Her delegation looked forward to the final evaluation of the Decade that would take place at the forthcoming session of the UNESCO Executive Board and to the latter's suggestions for follow-up activities to the Decade.

18. China believed that culture and development were mutually reinforcing and was building a socialist culture with Chinese characteristics to support its economic development. It would continue its cultural exchanges with many different countries and its unique contribution to human civilization.

19. **Mr. Ouattara** (Côte d'Ivoire) took note with satisfaction of the many activities which had taken place in Africa in the context of the Decade and welcomed the resolution (28C/Resolution 3.2) whereby the UNESCO General Conference requested the Director-General to ensure that acknowledgement of the cultural dimension in the process of sustainable development remained a priority in UNESCO's post-Decade programmes. It was important to ensure that the cultural dimension was taken into account in all economic development activities throughout the United Nations system.

20. **Mr. Chang Beom Cho** (Republic of Korea) said that the proposal contained in the report entitled "Our Creative Diversity", regarding the need for a new code of global ethics, had particular importance given the ever-expanding globalization and economic integration. Unfortunately, the report of the Secretary-General (A/52/382) provided little guidance for substantive discussion of such a code or of the effects of globalization on the diversity and peaceful coexistence of cultures.

21. The Republic of Korea had learned from its own experience of rapid economic and social transformation that culture and development could be mutually reinforcing and enriching. As economic development progressed, people turned to their own culture as a means of defining their identity. As the economy developed further, culture provided a source of creativity and originality, which could quickly become one of the critical factors in the fast-growing information industry. The production of the manual

regarding a cultural approach to development was one of the greatest achievements of the Decade.

22. In order to be effective, development strategies must be culturally sensitive and must embrace culture as a powerful and integral component of development. It was important to consider how best to enjoy the benefits without losing the creativity arising from cultural diversity.

23. In conclusion, the international community must build on the progress made during the Decade by pursuing follow-up activities. In that connection he looked forward to the intergovernmental conference on cultural policies which the Swedish Government would be hosting in 1998.

24. **Ms. Galindo** (Colombia) said that the cultural dimension of development had not figured among the highest priorities of the developing countries since the latter had had other, more pressing, concerns including the need to alleviate poverty, promote economic development and deal with overwhelming social problems. Although Colombia shared many of those concerns, it had taken part in cultural development activities on both the national and international level.

25. On the national level, it had established a Ministry of Culture. Internationally, it had hosted two meetings of the Movement of Non-Aligned Countries, one for experts in biodiversity, and another for Ministers of Culture. The latter had made proposals to promote cultural cooperation and to ensure respect for cultural diversity and freedom of expression in the development of cultural activities.

26. Colombia subscribed to the view that international cultural relations should be based on cooperation rather than confrontation. That implied respect for cultural heritage, pluralism, and freedom of expression and cultural development.

27. Globalization was introducing new types of interdependence and hierarchies, which challenged the past of many cultures. One of the aims of sustainable development should be to bring about a juster and more democratic world. To achieve that international economic cooperation was vital. Such cooperation should be based not solely on markets but also on knowledge and a new cultural ethic. It should foster the acquisition of new skills conducive to the development of a new society in each country.

The meeting rose at 11.15 a.m.